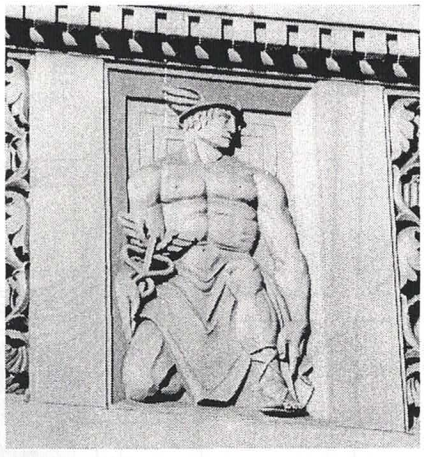
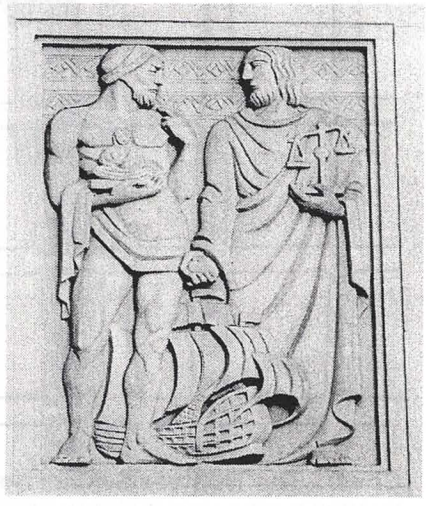
LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT





Trustees System Service Building
201 N. Wells St.

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, January 9, 2003

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner

Cover: The Trustees System Service Building was photographed soon after its completion in 1930 by the noted architectural photography firm of Hedrich-Blessing (left). The building is ornamented with low-relief sculpture by the husband-and-wife team of Eugene and Gwen Lux (right top & bottom).

Above: The Trustees System Service Building is located on the northeast corner of N. Wells and W. Lake Streets.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BUILDING

201 N. WELLS ST.

BUILT: 1929-30
ARCHITECTS: THIELBAR & FUGARD
ARTISTS: EUGENE & GWEN LUX; EDGAR MILLER

The Trustees System Service Building is one of Chicago's most distinctive Jazz Age skyscrapers. Built in 1929-30 at the intersection of Lake and Wells Streets, the building reflects the confidence and vision of Chicago businessmen during this period as new office buildings were built north and west of the city's traditional downtown. It was designed by noted Chicago architects Thielbar & Fugard in the popular Art Deco architectural style, and is unusual in its use of materials and colors, with pale gold limestone at the building's base giving way first to darker red brick, then lighter yellow-red brick towards the building's crown. Its office and banking lobbies also are unusual in their color schemes, with finely detailed red and green marble walls.

Thielbar & Fugard, the architects for the Trustees System Service Building, are significant in Chicago architecture as the designers of the McGraw-Hill Building on North Michigan Avenue and as associated architects for the Jewelers Building on East Wacker Drive, both Chicago Landmarks. In addition, John Fugard was the designer, through his earlier firm of Fugard & Knapp, of several luxury apartment buildings on Chicago's prestigious East Lake Shore Drive (now a Chicago Landmark district) and was associated with the design of the Allerton Hotel on North Michigan Avenue, also a Chicago Landmark.

The Trustees System Service Building is richly ornamented with finely detailed low-relief sculpture by the husband-and-wife team of Eugene and Gwen Lux, also the artists associated with the McGraw-Hill Building. These sculptures chronicle the history of

banking, commerce and trade through allegorical scenes that combine traditional and modern imagery. The building also is embellished with cut-lead grillework depicting allegorical scenes of everyday work life by the noteworthy Chicago artist Edgar Miller.

The Trustees System Service Building is located at the intersection of several of Chicago's elevated railroad lines. Through its distinctive appearance and dramatic location, the building is an important visual landmark for thousands of Chicagoans daily.

Building Construction and Description

The Trustees System Service Company, a private loan and investment bank specializing in consumer loans, was founded in 1914 by businessman John Charles Corcoran. The company allowed customers to make deposits that would build equity towards home mortgages. Once a target down payment was reached, the company provided a loan for the remainder of a home purchase price. Similar in general concept to already established savings and loan organizations and credit unions in America, the Trustees System Service Company was based on European banking models such as the Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitzch systems of Germany and the People's Banks of Italy. The company grew to 24 branches nationwide by 1929, with its national headquarters and four branches in Chicago. That year, the company commissioned a headquarters building from Chicago architects Thielbar & Fugard, and the new Trustees System Service Building was completed the following year.

The Trustees System Service Company occupied the second, third, and fourth floors while leasing the rest of the building. The building early on acquired a reputation for the international flavor of its office tenants, including the Italian Chamber of Commerce, National Railways of Mexico and the consulates of Belgium, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Italy and Mexico.

The Trustees System Service Building is located at the northwestern edge of the Loop at Lake and Wells Streets.

Thre Trustees System Service Building is a 28-story skyscraper built in the Art Deco architectural style. (Photograph was taken in December 2002 during the building's renovation.)

The Trustees System Service Building soon after its completion in 1930.

The building is a 28-story skyscraper located at the northeast corner of Lake and Wells Streets in downtown Chicago, a block south of Wacker Drive and the Chicago River. Located where Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) elevated tracks criss-cross and trains enter the Loop from the North and West Sides, the building consists of a 20-story base topped by an eight-story set-back tower. Its structural system is unusual in that it combines cast-iron reinforced concrete with steel framing. The building's first twenty stories were constructed of concrete slabs and columns reinforced with cast-iron cores and helical bars, while the set-back tower was framed in steel. The first four floors are faced in pale gold limestone while upper floors are clad with variegated-colored brick that graduates in color from rust red with purple flecks cladding the building's lower floors to lighter yellow-red with rust-colored flecks used for the building's tower. The use of such gradations of brick color was meant to make the building appear taller and to give the illusion of daylight striking the building even on a cloudy day. Lower walls have rounded brick laid in vertical courses resembling fluted columns, while upper-floor brickwork is flat. Terra cotta is used for lintels, spandrels and parapets.

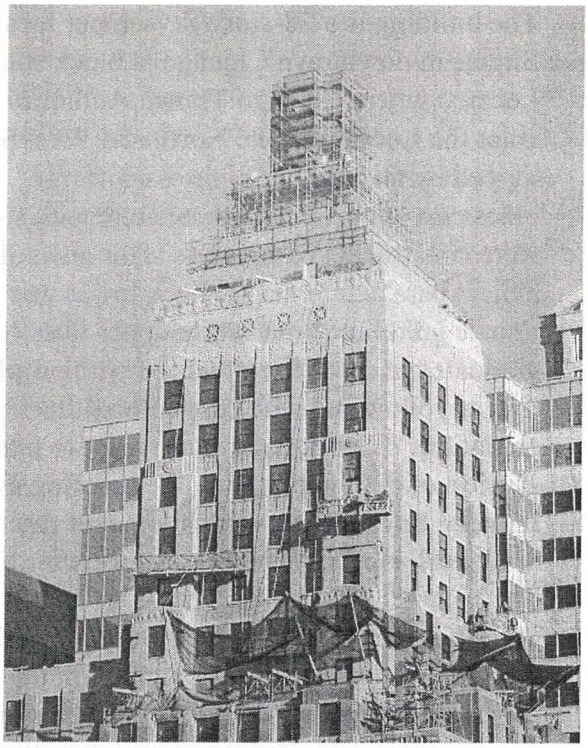
The Trustees System Service Building is designed in the Art Deco architectural style, popular for skyscraper construction in the late 1920s, with an emphasis on visual verticality, bold building forms, abstracted geometric and foliate ornament, richly-colored building materials, and decorative sculpture that combines traditional imagery with modern forms. Upper-floor windows are set between slightly projecting piers, emphasizing the building's verticality. Building profiles are crisply delineated. Spandrel panels and parapets are ornamented with a variety of Art Deco-style motifs, including volutes, flower patterns, gargoyles and inverted crenelation. The building's tower is boldly modeled with a stepped ziggurat roof and sharply-outlined terra-cotta crown, and is ornamented with terra-cotta decoration in stylized leaf and sunburst patterns.

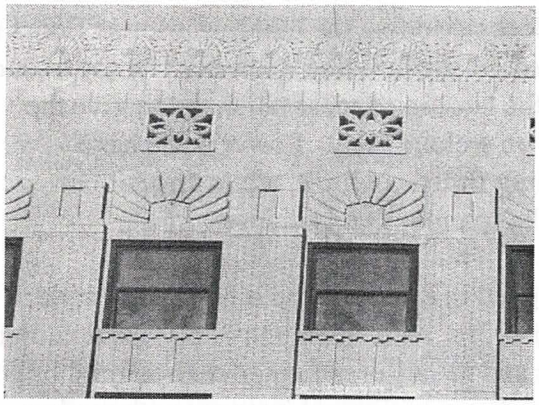
The building's original banking entrance is set within a two-story-high rectangular arch centered on the building's south side. East of the banking entrance is a smaller-scale entrance for the building's office lobby. A second entrance on Wells Street provides additional access to the office lobby, which is L-shaped and wraps around the original banking lobby, a two-story space that originally provided direct access to the Trustees System Service Company banking hall on the second floor. Storefronts occupy the remainder of the first floor.

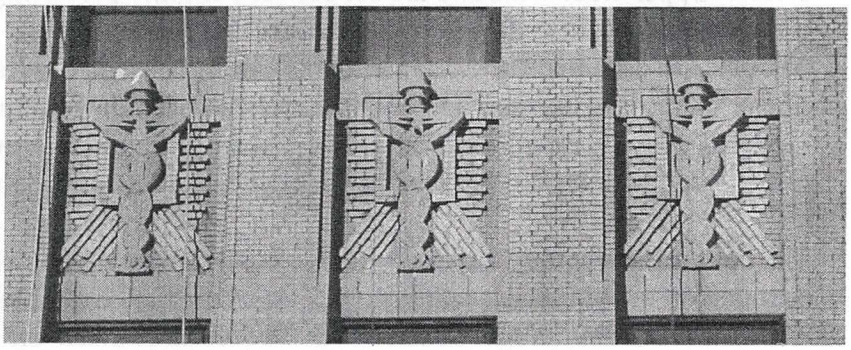
The two-story-high banking entrance is the most visually dramatic feature of the building's base, lavishly decorated with stylized pilasters, low-relief sculptural panels, an intricately-detailed, cut-lead transom, and a simple low-pitched pediment. Carved into the pediment are the building's original name and the date of the bank's founding, "Trustees System Service, founded MCMXIV."

The entrance's ten low-relief sculptural panels, carved by Gwen Lux and Eugene Van Breeman Lux, depict the evolution of commerce and banking through the use of allegorical figures and sayings. Panels with sayings such as "To Safeguard Wealth Men Established Banks" and "Exchange by Barter Marked the Dawn of Trade" alternate with

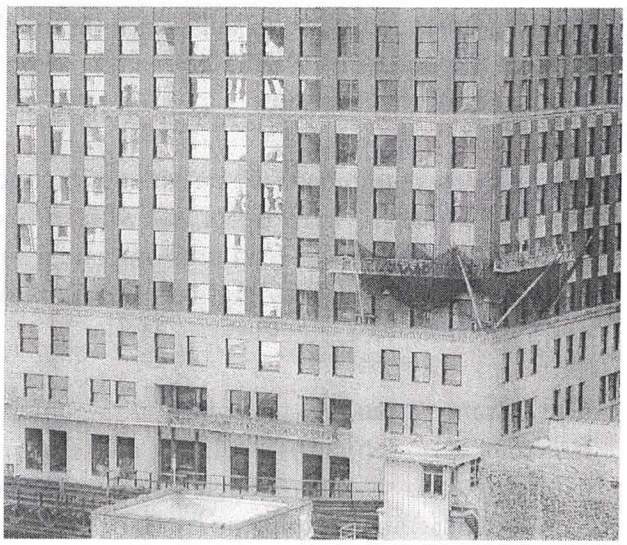
Right: The Trustees System Service Building is distinguished by a set-back tower topped by a ziggurat and crown. (The building is currently under rehabilitation.) Below: Art Deco-style sunbursts and swags ornament the parapet just below the ziggurat.







Right: Spandrels just below the building's main setback are elaborately detailed with geometric Art Deco-style terra cotta and brick.



Right: The base of the Trustees System Service Building is clad with pale gold limestone while upper floors are brick. Above: Brickwork on lower floors is composed of rounded headers, imitating fluted Classical pilasters.

allegorical illustrations of these sayings. These sculptural reliefs combine realistic, sharply-profiled human figures in a manner that combines modern boldness of form with traditional vernacular and Classical imagery.

The banking entrance doors are set below a grid of glass panels that rises to the top of the two-story surround. These panels consist of a cut-lead grillwork sandwiched between glass. Designed by Chicago artist Edgar Miller, the lead grillwork contains human figures representing the many trades of man through history, including mining, farming, and logging, set within lace-like geometry.

The window spandrels flanking the banking entrance and located between the second and third floors are also by Eugene and Gwen Lux and depict Greek mythological figures, including Hermes (representing commerce) and a female figure (possibly Pomona) with a cornucopia and beehive representing industry. Other spandrels at this building level contain a variety of decorative motives, including wreaths ornamented with flower pods and fleur-de-lis.

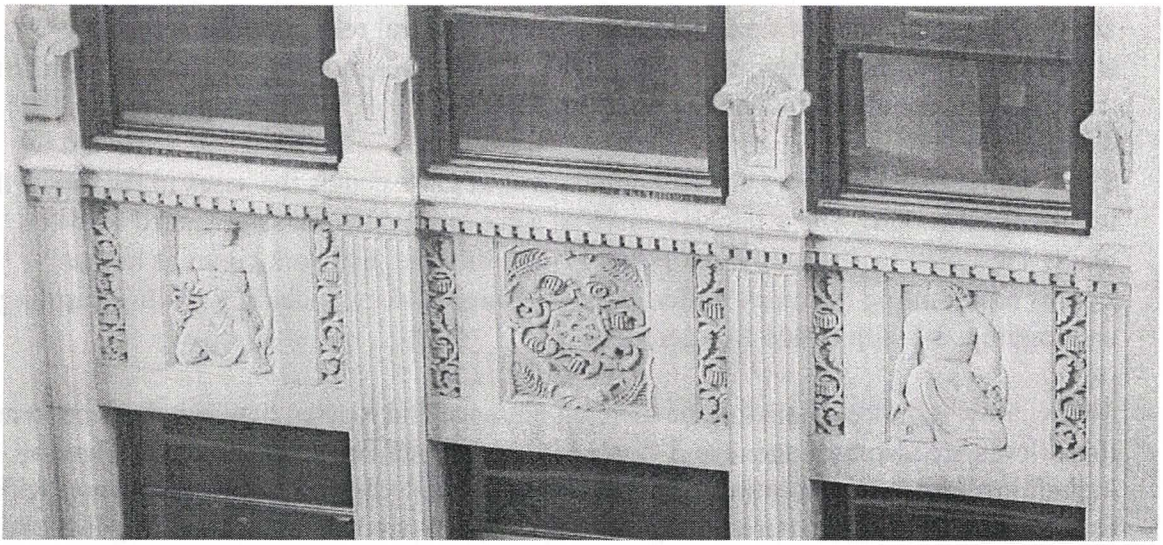
The adjacent office lobby entrance has a brass revolving door set within a cast-iron surround. Above the entrance, "201 North Wells Building" is incised in stone. The Wells Street entrance to the building's office lobby has a similar surround, ornamented with mythological winged griffins. Storefront windows on both the south and west elevations have similar cast-iron surrounds with stylized classical ornament, including attached colonettes and curved feather finials.

Inside, the building's office lobby is dramatically ornamented with unusual blood-red Numidian marble, quarried in Algeria, trimmed with gold leaf. A 1930 *Chicago Evening Post* article stated:

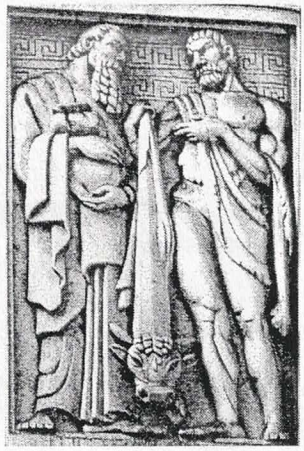
> The romance of ancient Rome, with its mighty legions, and the Sahara Desert, with its burnoosed Arabs, lingers about the warm-toned red Numidian marble in the lobby of the Trustees System national headquarters, for this marble came from the old Roman Quarries in northern Africa, and was used exclusively in the great palaces of the Imperial City. For centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire the quarries were lost, and it was not until late in the nineteenth century that they were rediscovered. It is said the Trustees System headquarters, the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh and the Union Trust Company in Detroit are the only buildings in America which are fortunate enough to possess this rare relic of old Roman splendor.

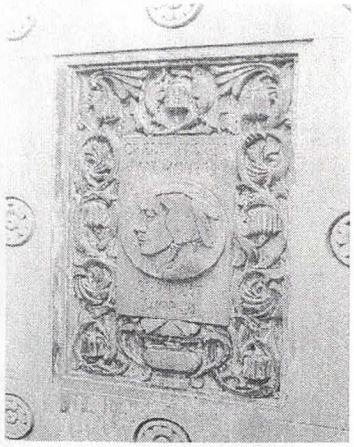
Elevator doors are bronze, etched with stylized Art Deco-style leaves, flowers, pods, and ziggurats. The floor is laid with Napoleon gray marble with borders of Cardiff green and Travertine Antique marble. The 13-foot-high plaster ceiling has scalloped plaster ceiling beams springing from marble pilasters.

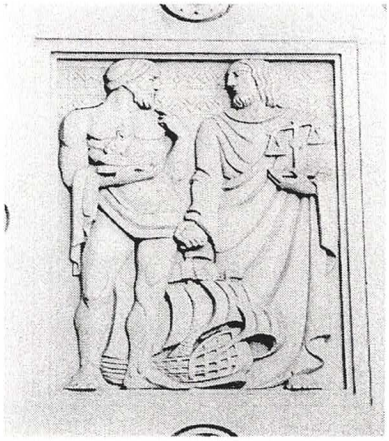
The banking lobby connects with the main portion of the office lobby through a large rectangular door, ornamented with cut-lead grillework designed by Edgar Miller and

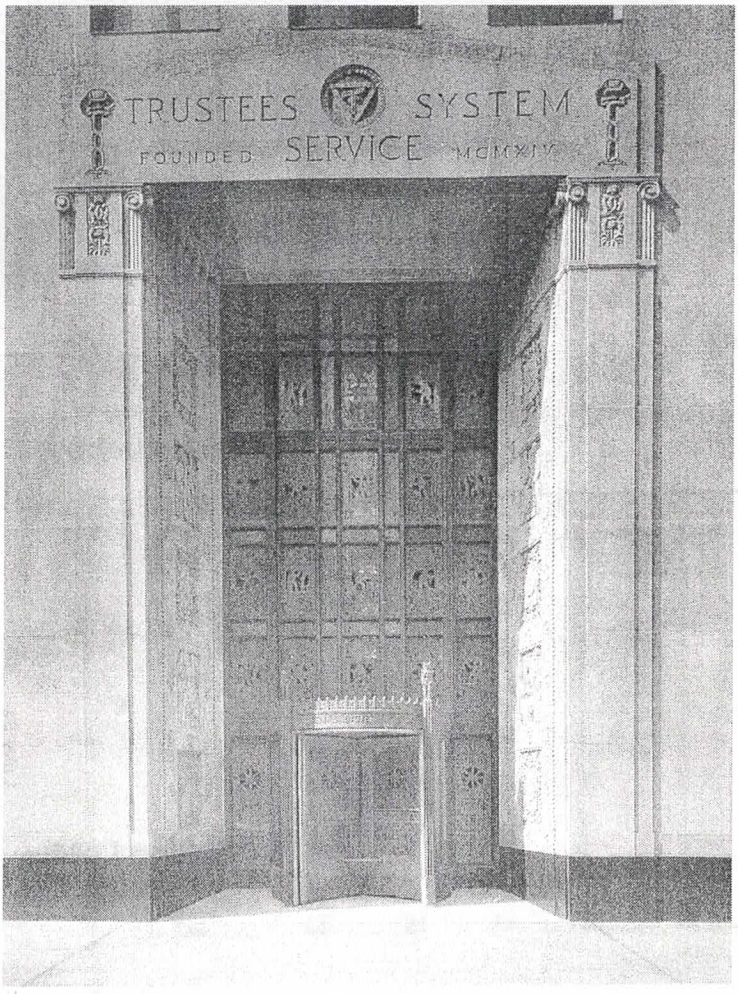


Above: The entrance to the Trustees System Service Building's original banking lobby and hall is set within a two-story-high rectangular arch facing Lake Street. Top: Low-relief sculptural spandrels, designed by Eugene and Gwen Lux and located between 2nd- and 3rd-floor windows, depict the Greek gods Hermes and Pomona.

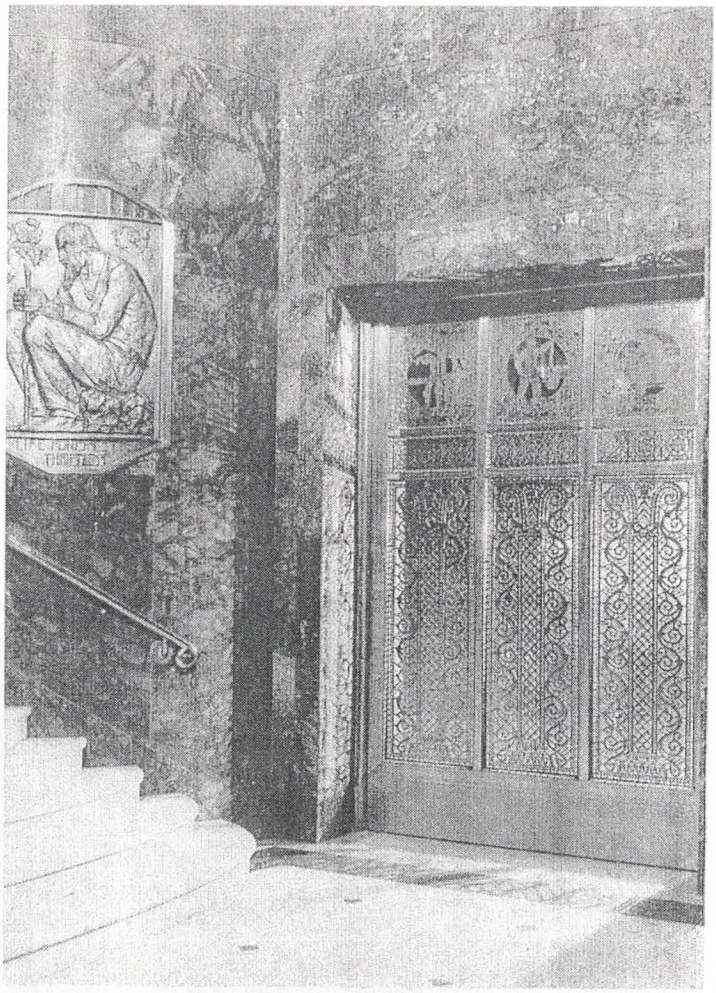




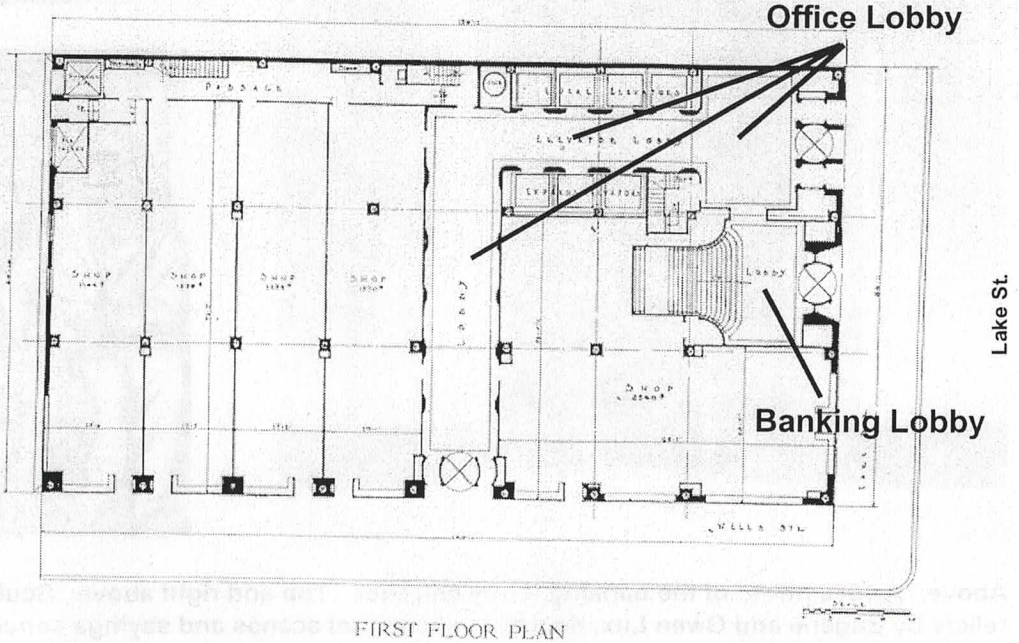




Above: A 1930 photo of the banking lobby entrance. Top and right above: Sculptural reliefs by Eugene and Gwen Lux, depicting allegorical scenes and sayings concerning the history of trade, commerce, and banking, ornament the entrance.



Below: The Trustees System Service Building has a 1st-floor L-shaped office lobby clad with red Numidian marble and with entrances from both Lake and Wells Streets. Right: An entrance between the office lobby and banking lobby is ornamented with a cut-lead grille designed by Edgar Miller (Photograph from 1930).



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

similar to that used for the banking lobby entrance transom. The banking lobby itself is 25 feet in height and finely detailed with various marbles, including a Travertine floor detailed with black Belgian marble and a sixteen-foot-wide dark green marble staircase that originally led to the second-floor banking hall. The walls of the staircase are clad with red Numidian marble matching that used for the office lobby walls. Set into the staircase walls are a pair of bronze plaques, also designed by the Luxs. Allegorical in image, one symbolizes "Thrift" with images of an owl (representing wisdom), a beehive (denoting hard work), a prosperous-looking man, and the phrase "Life prospers the thrifty," while the other, "Thriftlessness," depicts a shoeless, ragged-looking man surrounded by weed-like thistles and thorns and bears the phrase "Life punishes the thriftless."

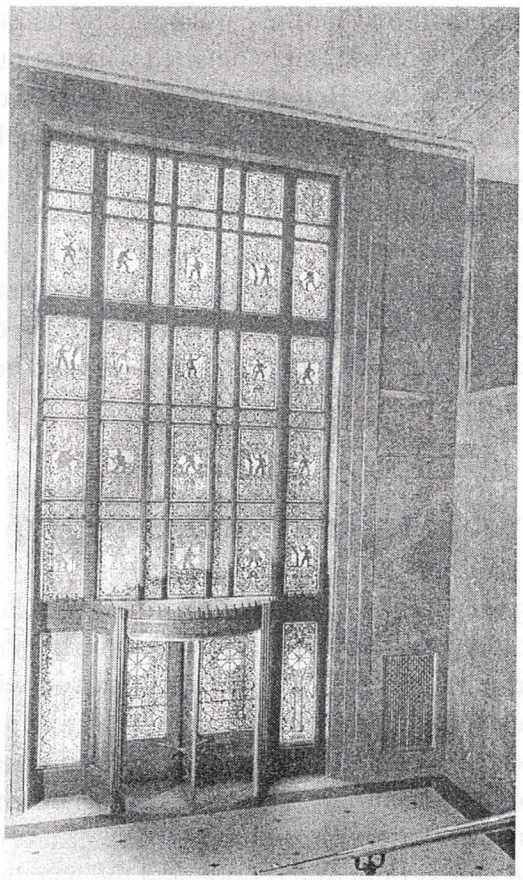
Chicago Skyscraper Design and the Art Deco style

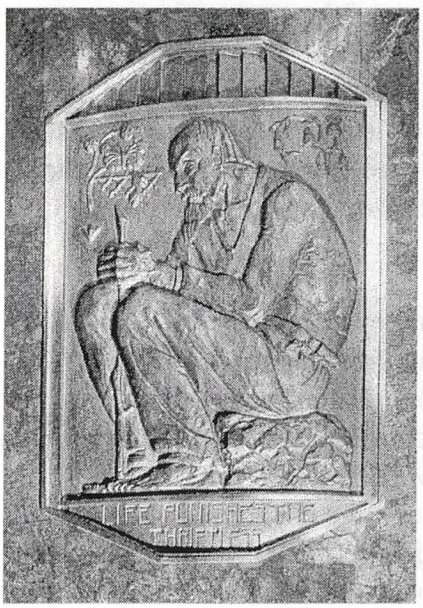
During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Chicago grew to become America's second largest city. As a national center of industry, commerce, and finance, the city developed a city center—the "Loop"—densely built up with skyscrapers, an innovative building type developed largely by Chicago architects in response to economic forces, building technology advances, and both natural and manmade constraints to development that were present in the city. The restraints to downtown development created by geographic factors (Lake Michigan and the Chicago River), combined with manmade barriers (the railroad yards south of the Loop and the warehouse districts along the river) and high land prices, encouraged Chicago real estate developers to build up rather than out. The development of new building technologies such as skeleton-frame construction, reliable elevators, and electricity made skyscrapers possible.

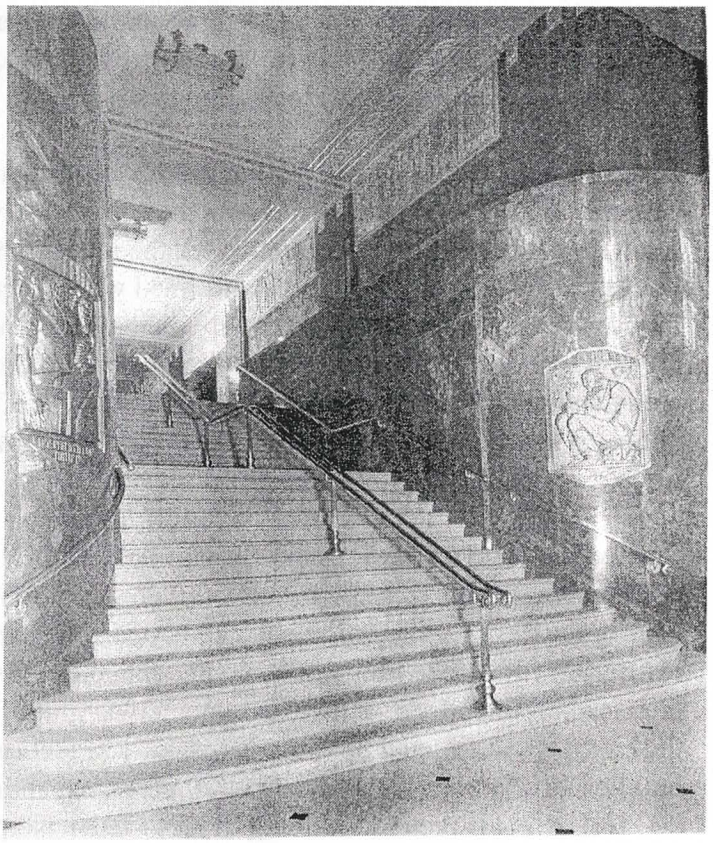
In the 1920s, however, Chicago's downtown began to expand outward from its traditional boundaries. New development along the Chicago River itself was encouraged by the 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, which called for the redevelopment of the city's riverfront warehouse district with a grand boulevard lined with office buildings. Wacker Drive, as the innovative double-decked street was called, opened in 1926 on the former site of the city's wholesale produce district. In response, builders constructed new skyscrapers along and near Wacker Drive in the late 1920s. The Trustees System Service Building, although not fronting on Wacker Drive itself, benefitted from the new focus on the Loop's northern edge for office development.

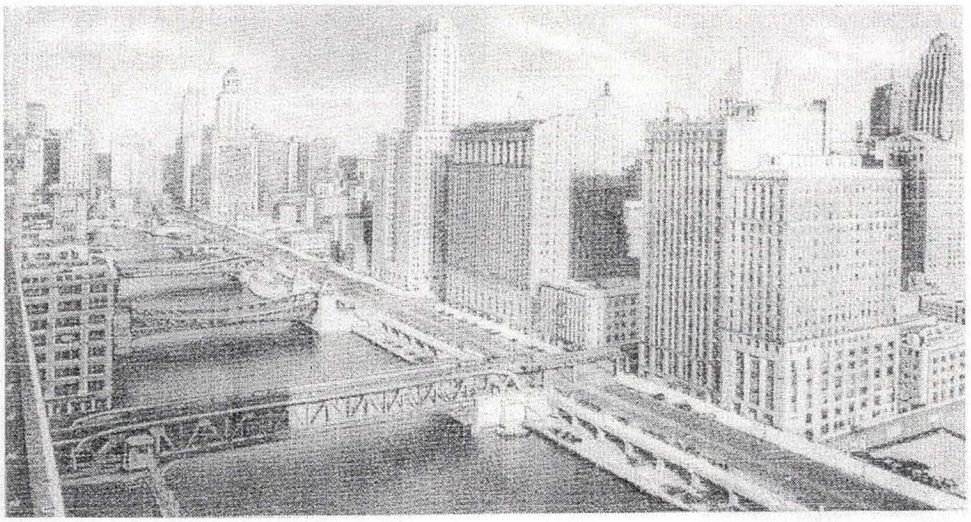
The overall form of the Trustees System Service Building, with its distinctive set-back tower rising from a large base, reflects changes in building design brought about by Chicago's 1923 zoning ordinance. Until 1893, the height of Chicago buildings was restricted only by the limits of building technologies such as skeleton-frame construction or caisson foundations. However, a perceived glut of available office space that year led the city to create a legal building height of 130 feet (groundline to cornice). This legal building height varied over the next 30 years, expanding to 260 feet in 1902, reduced to 200 feet in 1911, then raised to 264 feet in 1920. No provision for towers was provided

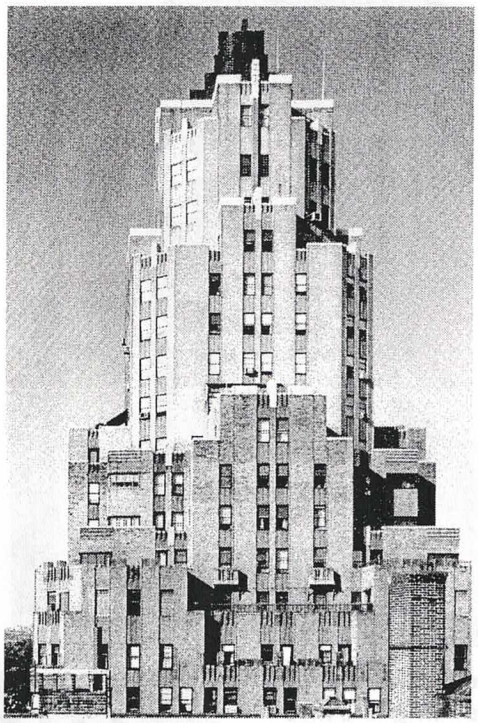
Right: The original banking lobby of the Trustees System Service Building, entered from Lake St., is two-stories in height. The entrance is ornamented with a cut-lead grille by Edgar Miller depicting allegorical scenes of "the trades of man." Bottom right: The original staircase to the second-floor banking hall. (The lower steps, removed in an earlier renovation, are being replaced in the current rehabilitation. Below: Low-relief sculptures depicting "Thrift" and "Thriftlessness" by Eugene and Gwen Lux. Photos from 1930.



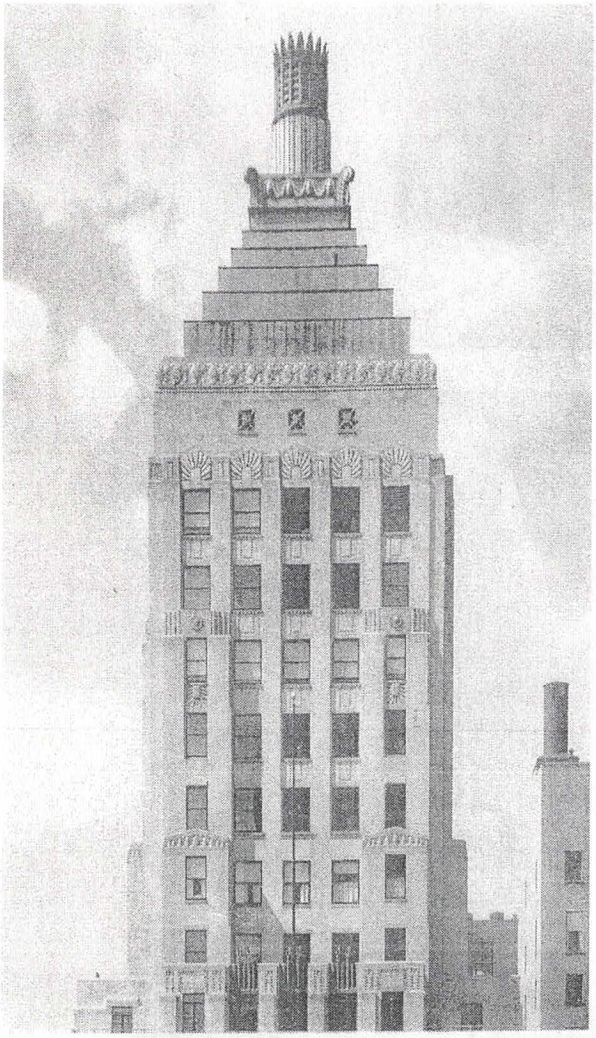








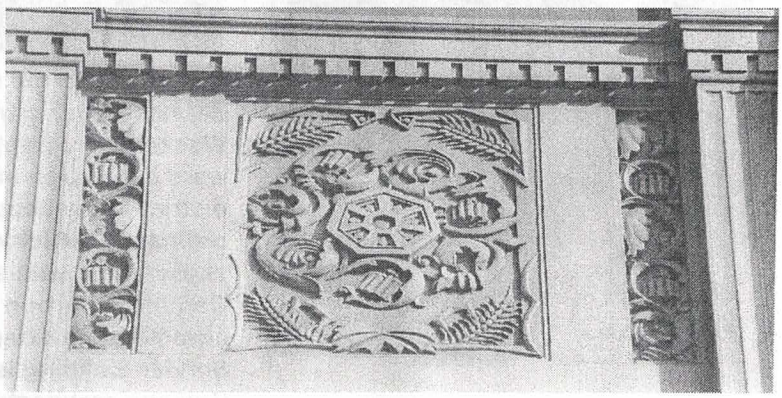
Influences on the design of the Trustees System Service Building include the construction of Wacker Drive (top), which encouraged the northward expansion of the traditional office building district in the Loop, and the 1923 Chicago zoning ordinance, which encouraged the creation of skyscrapers with set-back towers, including the Carbide & Carbon Building (left). The polychrome brick exterior of the Trustees System Service Building is unusual in the context of Chicago architecture, but is similar to several buildings of the late 1920s in New York, including the Master Institute and Riverside Museum building, built in 1928-29 (above).



The Trustees System Service Building is a fine example of the Art Deco architectural style.

Above right: A postcard view of the building.

Above left: A 1930 view of the building's tower, with its set-backs and ziggurat roof.



Right: Many of the building's spandrels have boldly modeled foliate ornament.

for in the building codes of this period. Such constraints therefore encouraged blocky buildings that covered entire building lots, wrapped around inner lightwells, and rose straight up to the maximum height allowed by law.

In 1923, Chicago enacted its first zoning ordinance which, among other things, allowed for taller skyscrapers. High-rise buildings could rise higher than 264 feet, but only through the use of set-back towers that covered only 25 percent of the building lot. Cubic volume restrictions also affected the size and height of these skyscraper towers. The result was a number of soaring towers punctuating the skyline in what had been a relatively even-corniced downtown. The Trustees System Service Building's tower conforms to this new building formula.

The Trustees System Service Building is a fine example of Art Deco-style architecture, a popular style in Chicago during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Named after the Exposition des Art Decoratifs, a world's fair held in Paris in 1925 that emphasized highly decorative modern architectural and decorative styles, Art Deco buildings, including the Trustees System Service Building, have hard-edged, linear forms with an emphasis on verticality. Setbacks often are used to emphasize both a building's geometric form and height. Vertical strips of windows with decorated spandrels add to an Art Deco-style building's sense of vertical composition. Ornament is stylized in a variety of hard-edged geometric and abstracted foliate designs, usually found around entrances, windows, cornices and parapets. Many Art Deco-style buildings also utilize simplified, abstracted Classical ornament and figures, and the style was sometimes called "Modern Classicism." Considered a "modern" style in the 1920s, Art Deco was preferred by Americans over the more austere International Style popular among avant-garde architects in Europe.

The Trustees System Service Building is one of Chicago's most unusual Art Deco-style skyscrapers in its cladding and use of color. The building is clad with brick rather than the limestone or terra cotta more typical of 1920s-era Chicago Art Deco-style skyscrapers. The gradation of brick color from dark (at its base) to light (at its top) is unusual in the context of Chicago high-rises; only the Wrigley Building, with its terra-cotta skin which edges from dark cream at its base to blazing white at tower's tip, has a similar use of color. Instead, the Trustees System Service Building is more typically New York in its use of color gradations. New York buildings that utilize such a color scheme include an apartment building from 1930, designed by architects Schwartz & Gross and located at Central Park West and 66th St., and Harvey Wiley Corbett's Master Institute and Riverside Museum, built on Riverside Dr. in 1928-29. The Trustees System Service Building's finely wrought use of color also extends into the building's interior with the use of richly colored marbles, including deep red and green marbles imported from Europe and Africa.

Most 1920s-era skyscrapers in Chicago tended to be clad in gray Bedford limestone or terra cotta that mimicked gray stone. The Carbide and Carbon Building at 230 N. Michigan Ave. (1929, Burnham Brothers) is most similar to the Trustees System Service Building in its overall form (a slender tower rising from a broad base) and use of intense color (dark green terra-cotta cladding).

In addition, the Trustees System Service Building reflects the interest in the late 1920s in buildings embellished with allegorical sculpture related to the companies and institutions housed within them. Several skyscrapers in Chicago from the period are ornamented with such low-relief sculptural panels, including the One North LaSalle Building (1929-30, Karl M. Vitzthum & Co.), the McGraw-Hill Building (1928-29, Thielbar & Fugard), the 333 North Michigan Building (1928, Holabird & Root), the Chicago Daily News Building (1929, Holabird & Root), and the Chicago Board of Trade (1930, Holabird & Root). The sculptures created by Gwen and Eugene Lux for the Trustees System Service Building are noteworthy for their use of traditional imagery, both medieval and Classical, distinguished by bold modern forms.

Architects Thielbar & Fugard

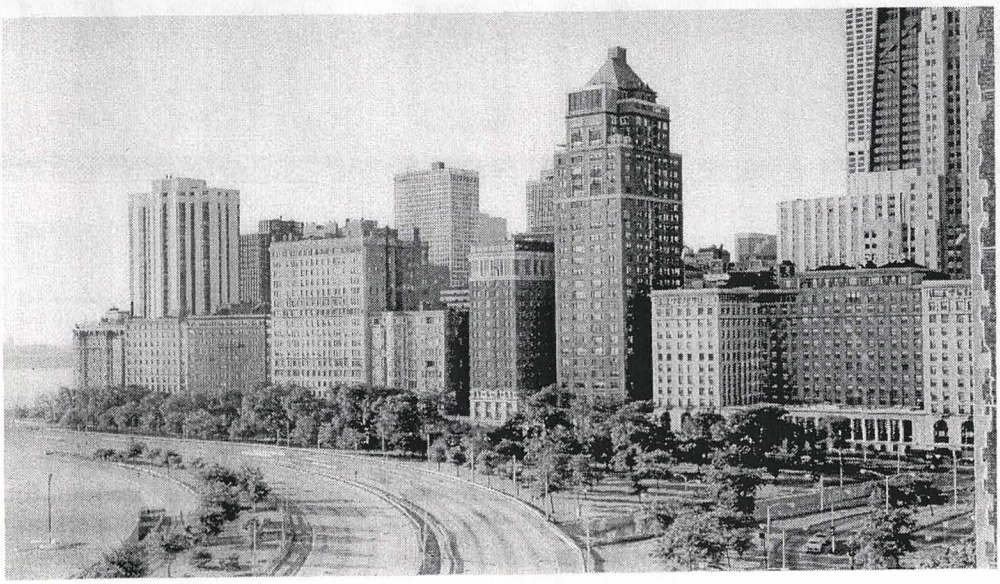
The architectural firm of Thielbar & Fugard was founded in 1925. **Frederick J. Thielbar (1886-1941)**, a native of Peoria, Illinois, attended the University of Illinois before going to work for the noted Chicago firm of Holabird & Roche. There, Thielbar served as a superintendent of construction and later as a partner. His most significant work while with Holabird & Roche was the Chicago Temple Building, located at Clark and Washington Streets and constructed in 1923. Thielbar was a member of the Board of Directors of the Methodist Church in Chicago and secured the commission for the building, built by the First Methodist Church to house both church sanctuaries and rental offices. Thielbar was both principal designer and construction supervisor for this work.

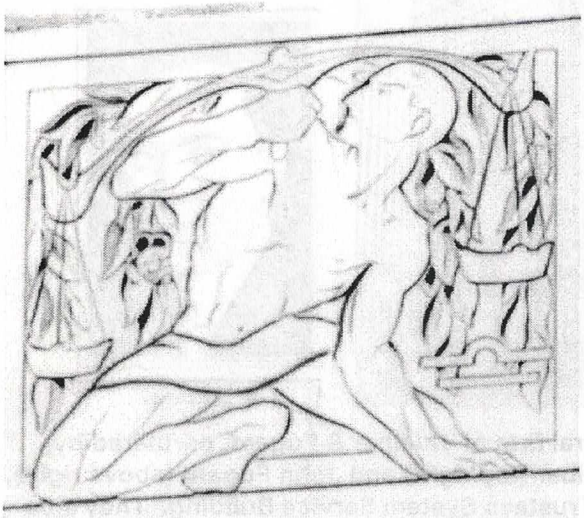
John Reed Fugard (1886-1968) was born in Newton, Iowa, and also attended the University of Illinois, receiving a B.S. in architecture in 1910. His early practice was with George A. Knapp in the firm of Fugard & Knapp, and the pair designed several noteworthy luxury apartment and hotel buildings in Chicago during the 1910s and early 1920s, including three of the eight buildings that comprise the East Lake Shore Drive Chicago Landmark District. Fugard & Knapp also designed the Moody Memorial Church on N. Clark St. (1924) and the South Water Market complex on Chicago's Near West Side (1925). They also collaborated with New York architects Murgatroyd and Ogden in the construction of the Allerton Hotel, 701 N. Michigan Ave., built in 1924 and a designated Chicago Landmark.

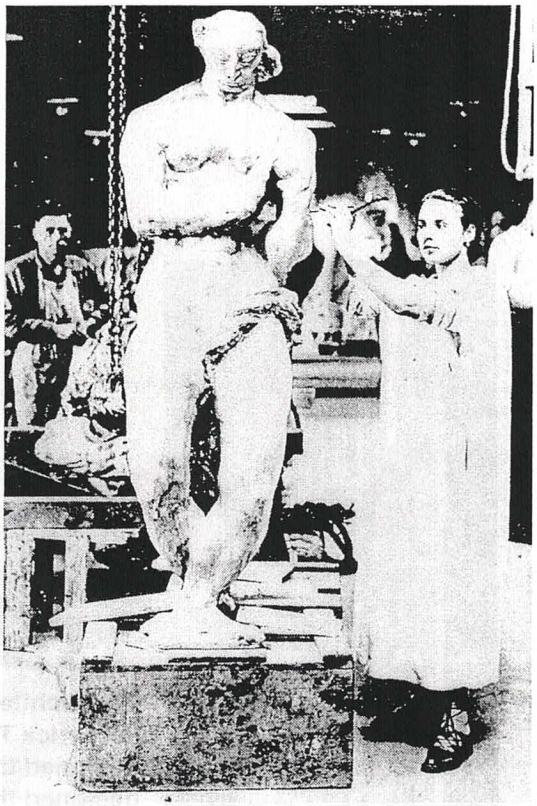
The firm of Thielbar & Fugard was formed in 1925. Significant buildings designed by the firm include the McGraw-Hill Building , 520 N. Michigan Ave., built in 1929 and a designated Chicago Landmark; the Raphael Hotel at 201 E. Delaware Pl.; the Colonnade apartment building at Main and Hinman in Evanston; the Hall of Religion for the 1933-34 Century of Progress Exposition; and the Wesley Memorial Hospital (now part of Northwestern Memorial Hospital) in 1941. The firm also collaborated in 1926 with architects Giaver & Dinkelberg on the design of the Jewelers Building at 35 E. Wacker Dr., designated a Chicago Landmark.

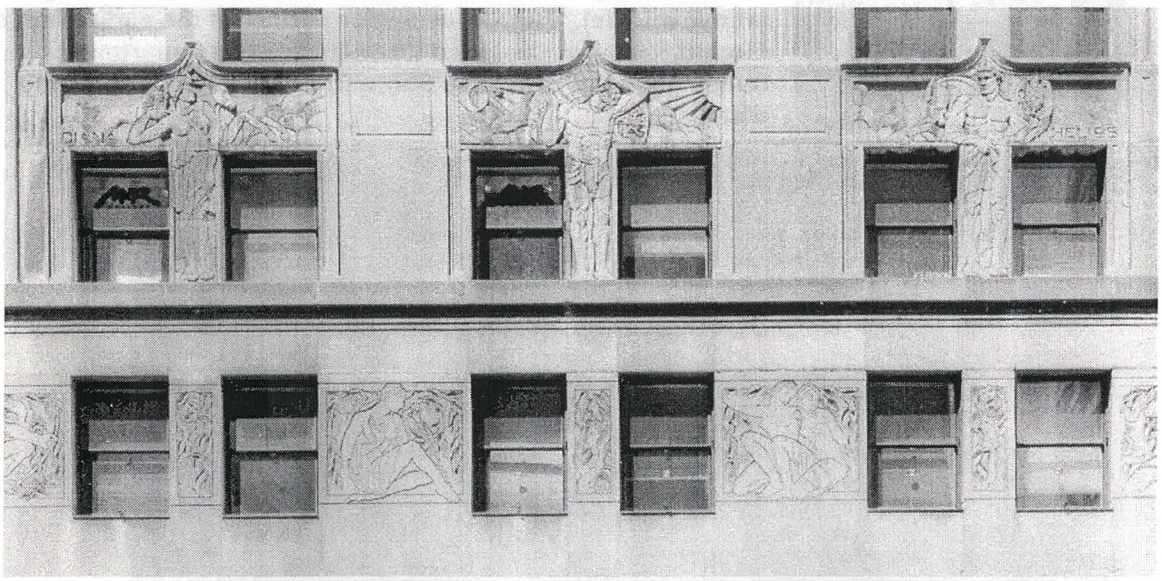
Fugard was prominent in civic affairs, taking a special interest in housing issues. He

The architectural firm of Thielbar & Fugard, partnered by Frederick Thielbar (top right) and John Fugard (above right), designed the Trustees System Service Building. They also designed the McGraw-Hill Building (left) and were associated with the design and construction of the Jewelers Building (above middle). Fugard, as senior partner of the earlier firm of Fugard & Knapp, designed three of the luxury apartment buildings in the East Lake Shore Drive Chicago Landmark district.









Eugene and Gwen Lux created the sculptural reliefs that ornament the Trustees System Service Building. Top right: Gwen Lux in her studio with a sculpture of *Eve* intended for Radio City Music Hall in New York. Above and top left: The McGraw-Hill Building's low-relief sculptures of Greek mythological and zodiac figures also were done by the Luxes.

served as a commissioner of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) and was a founder and president of the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council. Thielbar & Fugard also were associated architects on the Ida B. Wells housing project for the CHA, one of the city's early public housing projects in the late 1930s.

Artists Eugene & Gwen Lux and Edgar Miller

Eugene and Gwen Lux, husband and wife, designed the low-relief sculptural panels that ornament the Trustees System Service Building. **Eugene Van Breeman Lux** was born in Hungary in 1900 and received training as a sculptor at fine arts academies in Paris, Vienna, and Munich. Among his teachers were the French sculptor Bourdelle and the Yugoslav artist Ivan Mestrovic, known in Chicago for *The Spearman* and *The Bowman*, the giant figures of Native Americans on horseback that grace the Congress Plaza entrance to Grant Park. Along with the low-relief sculptures ornamenting Chicago's McGraw-Hill Building (created with his wife Gwen), the sculptural panels for the Trustees System Service Building are his best known artistic works; after their completion, Eugene Lux entered the newly developing field of industrial design.

Gwen Lux (1908-1986) had a long career as an artist. Born Gwen Wickerts, she worked early in her career in the art pottery studios of Mary Chase Stratton, the founder of the Pewabic Pottery and an important Arts and Crafts designer. She studied art at the Maryland Institute of Arts in Baltimore and the Boston School of Fine Arts, and (like her husband) studied with Mestrovic. Before working on the Trustees System Service commission, Gwen Lux designed (with her husband) low-relief sculptures for the McGraw-Hill Building, also by Thielbar & Fugard and built in 1928. Later commissions by Gwen Lux include an aluminum sculpture of Eve commissioned by the Radio City Music Hall in New York and installed in 1933. She worked as a designer for Steuben Glass in the 1930s, followed by the position of sculpture department chair at the School of the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts. Her later collaborations with architects included work for the University of Arkansas Theater (with Edward Durell Stone), the Northland Shopping Center, Detroit (with Victor Gruen), and the General Motors Technical Center, Warren, Michigan (with Eero Saarinen).

The Luxs' work for the Trustees System Service Building incorporates traditional natural-looking human figures and natural forms that reflect both Classical idealization and medieval, even vernacular, simplicity. These forms are boldly modeled, however, in a manner more typical of modernism. Like many artists of the early twentieth century, the Luxs strove to create works of art with which the average viewer would identify and that were both modern and with a strong connection to traditional art.

Edgar Miller (1899-1993) designed the cut-lead decorative grilles that ornament the transom above the building's banking lobby street entrance and the large door that separates the banking lobby from the building's office lobby. Born in Idaho, he enrolled at age 17 in the School of The Art Institute of Chicago. He then spent four years as an

apprentice to artist Alfonso Iannelli, best known for his collaborations with architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

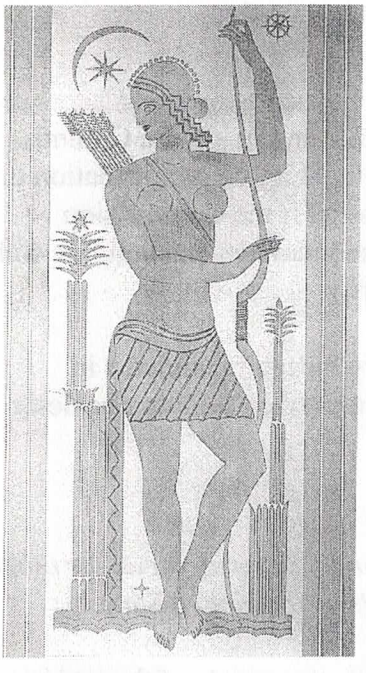
Miller worked in a variety of mediums, including carved wood and stone, ceramics, mural painting and stained and etched glass. He collaborated with a number of significant architects, including Andrew Rebori, Howard Van Doren Shaw, Barry Byrne, Thomas Tallmadge, and Holabird & Root. During the 1920s, he also regularly exhibited at The Art Institute while operating his own art gallery. In 1933-34, he was art director for the Streets of Paris concession at the Century of Progress Exposition.

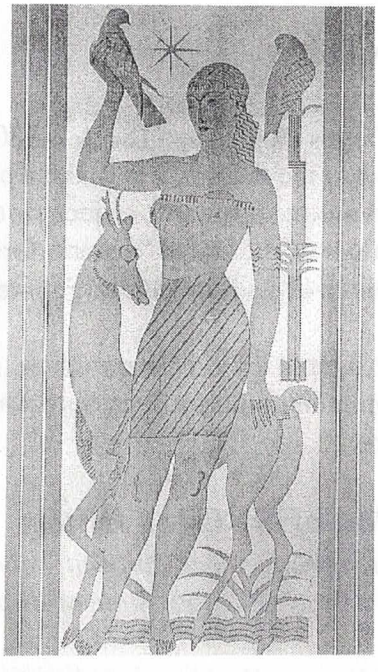
Miller was an eclectic artist, taking inspiration from a variety of sources, including medieval art and regional artistic traditions as far flung as Scandinavian and Polynesian. In the August 1932 issue of the national publication *Architecture*, Chicago architect Earl H. Reed, Jr., wrote about Miller's art:

> Through the modern pattern of Miller's art expression runs threads of things seen in the South Seas, Central American, and our own West and Southwest. Often a fugitive medievalism or a primitive classic spirit predominates. The influence of Iannelli can be seen in his Prairie-influenced stained glass and his love of bas-relief sculpture. Carved wood panels, woodcuts and other stained glass windows, however, reveal an interest in folk art, mythology and the Gothic traditions. Animals, especially birds, horses and antelopes, were used as subjects frequently by Miller who felt that figurative art was more meaningful to the average person than abstract art.

His best-known works include ornamental windows, ceramic tiles, and carved wood figures for the Fisher Studio Houses, 1209 N. State Pkwy. (1936, with Andrew Rebori, a designated Chicago Landmark), and the redesign and embellishment with Sol Kogan in the 1920s and 1930s of several brick buildings in the Old Town neighborhood. He also designed a set of sand-blasted glass panels depicting the Roman goddess Diana which originally ornamented the Michigan Square Building, 540 N. Michigan (1928, Holabird & Root, demolished) and the so-called "Animal Court"—a plaza designed as a children's wading pool with sprinklers and ornamented with stone sculptures that included a bear, an elephant, a bighorn sheep, and a musk ox—in the Jane Addams public housing project on Chicago's Near West Side. Miller also designed murals for the Tavern Club, located in Holabird & Root's 333 N. Michigan Ave. Building (1928), bronze sculpture for the North Dakota State Capitol in Bismark (1934), and various sculptures for Northwestern University's Technological Institute in Evanston (1942).

The cut-lead grilles created for the Trustees System Service Building were an innovation in both medium and subject matter for Miller, who most often drew from nature for his artistic motives. Here, he used finely-cut geometric patterns to frame human forms that were meant as allegorical figures depicting "the trades of man," a subject in keeping with the subject of the nobility of labor and thrift used by Gwen and Eugene Lux for their own sculptural contributions to the building.





Top right: Artist Edgar Miller designed the cut-lead grillework that ornaments the entrances to the Trustees System Service Building's original banking lobby. Other examples of his work include (top left) a woodcut study for a leaded-glass window, (above left) etched glass windows for the Michigan Square Building at 540 N. Michigan (1928, demolished), and (above right) a plaster relief for the Punch and Judy Theatre, W. Van Buren St. (demolished).

Later History

The Trustees System Service Building has been owned by a variety of owners since its completion in 1930. Declared insolvent during the Great Depression after a national "banking holiday" in 1933, the Trustees System Service Company closed its doors and the building was acquired afterwards by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company through a foreclosure proceeding. A group of trusts represented by the First National Bank of Chicago and the Northern Trust Company acquired the building, now known as the Lake-Wells Building, in 1945. Two years later Tishman Realty and Construction Company, a New York realty firm, bought the building, and in 1949, leased several floors to the Corn Products Refining Company, renaming the building for the agricultural products company. Then in 1955 New York investor Louis J. Glickman purchased the building, which became known as the Chicago Tower Building. The building was modernized in 1967, at which time the second-floor banking hall was largely stripped of historic details. The building currently is being renovated as a rental apartment building.

The Trustees System Service Building has been recognized for its architectural and artistic distinction. It was color-coded "orange" in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has been featured in a number of books on Chicago architecture, including the *AIA Guide to Chicago*, *The Sky's the Limit*, and *Chicago Architecture and Design, 1923-1993*.

Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Trustees System Service Building be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City s History

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.

- The Trustees System Service Building is a distinguished example of the soaring high-rises that became an important part of Chicago's skyline due to the city's 1923 zoning ordinance, which mandated skyscrapers with set-back towers.
- The Trustees System Service Building exemplifies the tremendous growth of Chicago's Loop during the 1920s, a period of prosperity that saw the expansion of

the city's traditional downtown north towards the Chicago River.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The Trustees System Service Building is a significant Art Deco-style skyscraper, a building type and architectural style of importance to Chicago architecture.

- The Trustees System Service Building is unusual in the context of Chicago Art Deco-style skyscrapers in its use of brick cladding and is distinguished by the overall quality of its brickwork, which varies in color and hue from rust red on lower floors to yellowish-red on the building's set-back tower.

- The Trustees System Service Building possesses exceptional overall craftsmanship in a variety of other materials, including terra cotta, stone, and metal.

- The exterior of the Trustees System Service Building is ornamented with excellent architectural sculpture, designed by noted artists Eugene and Gwen Lux, depicting allegorical scenes from the history of banking, commerce, and trade.

- The Trustees System Service Building's first-floor office and banking lobbies are unusually detailed with rare red Numidian and other marbles and ornamented with fine decoration, including cut-lead metal screens by significant artist Edgar Miller.

Criterion 5: Important Architect

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The Trustees System Service Building is the work of Thielbar & Fugard, a significant architectural firm in the history of the City of Chicago, designing the McGraw-Hill Building (520 N. Michigan Ave.) and associated with the design of the Jewelers Building (35 E. Wacker Dr.), both designated Chicago Landmarks.

- John Fugard also is significant as the designer, through his earlier firm of Fugard & Knapp, of several luxury apartment buildings on Chicago's prestigious East Lake Shore Dr. (a Chicago Landmark district) and was associated with the design of the Allerton Hotel (701 N. Michigan Ave.), also a designated Chicago Landmark.

- The architectural sculpture ornamenting the Trustees System Service Building is the work of noteworthy artists Eugene Van Breeman Lux and Gwen Lux, whose

An early (probably 1930s) view of the Trustees System Service Building. Located at the interesection of several Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) elevated train lines, the building is a familiar visual landmark for thousands of CTA riders daily.

work includes the low-relief sculptures decorating the McGraw-Hill Building (520 N. Michigan Ave.), a designated Chicago Landmark.

- The banking and office lobbies of the Trustees System Service Building contain decorative metal grilles by Edgar Miller, a significant Chicago artist whose art works ornament the Fisher Studio Houses (1209 N. State Pkwy., a designated Chicago Landmark), the "Animal Court" in the Jane Addams public housing project on Chicago's Near West Side, and several brick buildings renovated and artistically embellished with businessman Sol Kogan in the 1920s and 30s in the Old Town neighborhood.

Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- Through its presence at the northwestern corner of the Loop elevated tracks, the Trustees System Service Building is a distinctive visual presence and familiar "landmark" for thousands of Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) commuters entering and leaving downtown Chicago on the CTA's Loop elevated tracks.

Integrity Criteria

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The Trustees System Service Building possesses excellent physical integrity, displaying through its siting, scale and overall design its historic relationship to the surrounding Loop neighborhood. It retains its historic exterior form, materials and most detailing. It also retains most original detailing and materials in the first-floor office lobby, including marble walls and a cut-lead decorative grille separating the office lobby from the adjacent lobby that originally served the second-floor banking hall for the Trustees System Service Company. This banking lobby also retains much original detailing and materials, including marble walls and decorative low-relief sculptures, although the lower section of the stairs originally leading to the banking hall was removed (but will be replaced as part of the current rehabilitation).

Significant changes to the building include the remodeling of the original second-floor banking hall in 1967, which removed original stone and metal detailing. Single-pane windows installed in upper-floor windows in 1988 are currently being replaced with one-over-one, double-hung windows more in keeping with the building's original appearance. In addition, the terra-cotta crown atop the building's tower was recently removed; it will be replaced as part of the rehabilitation.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its evaluation of the Trustees System Service Building, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- all exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building; and
- the first-floor office and banking lobbies and entrances.

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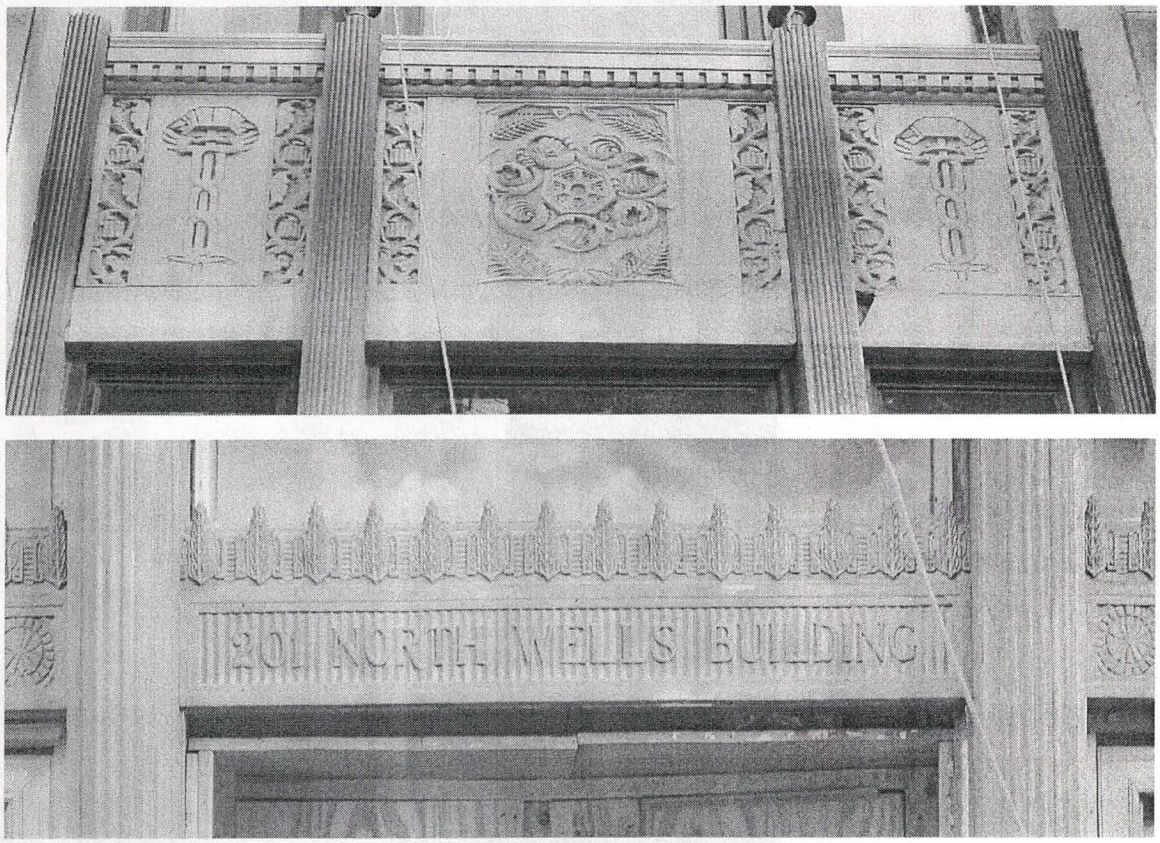
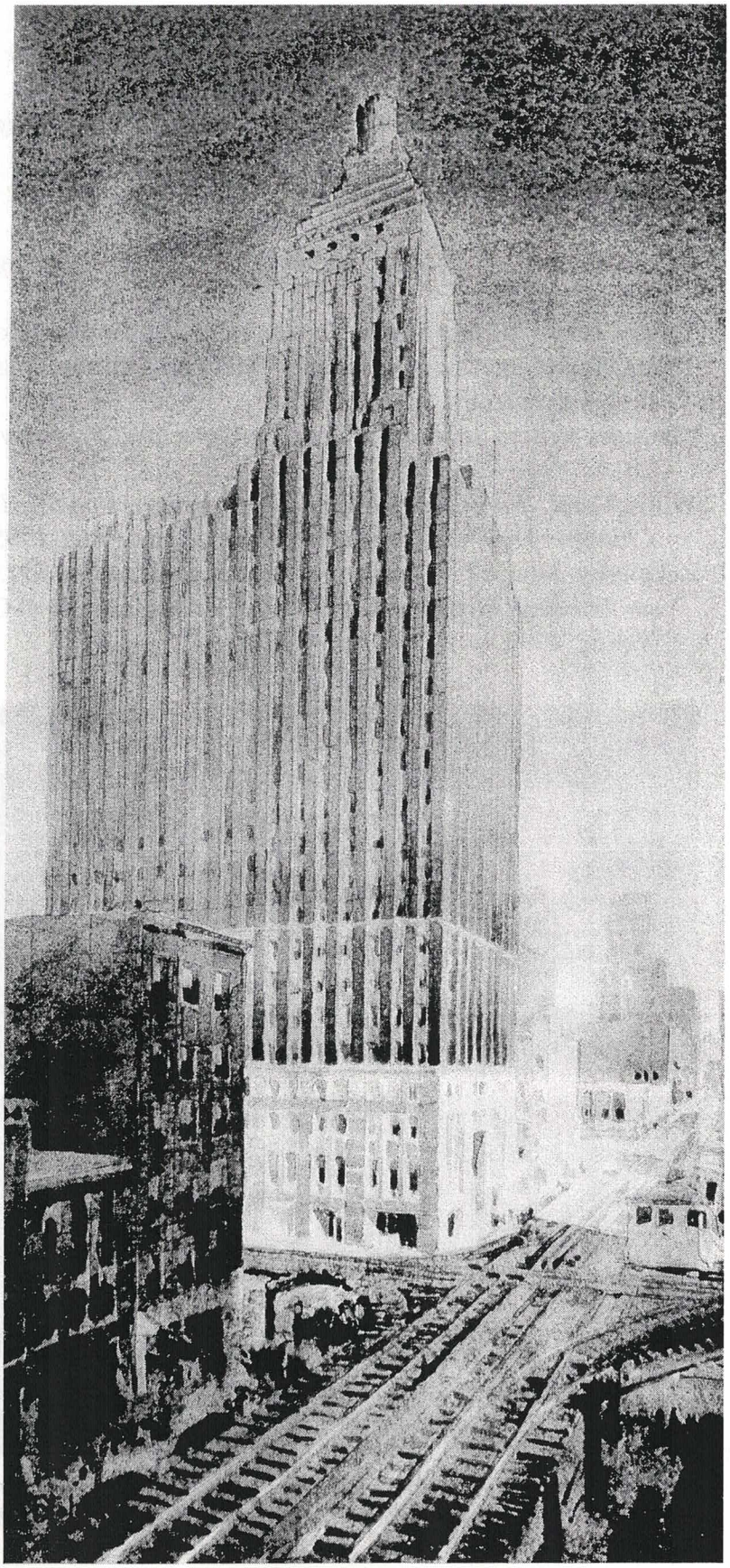


The Trustees System Service Building's entrances and storefronts are ornamented with cast-iron surrounds and stone sculptural reliefs in a combination of Classical and Art Deco styles.



A rendering of the Trustees System Service Building.

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From *Architectural Forum*: pp. 9 (bottom left), 10 (bottom).
From *Architectural Annual*: pp. 10 (top), 14 (top left).
From Robinson and Bletter, *Skyscraper Style*: p. 13 (bottom right).
From Willis, *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*: pp. 13 (top), 14 (top right).
Ron Gordon for the Commission on Chicago Landmarks: p. 17 (top left).
Bob Thall for the Commission on Chicago Landmarks: p. 17 (bottom).
From *The Art of Rockefeller Center*: p. 18 (top right).
From Reed, "Edgar Miller, Designer-Craftsman," *Architecture*: p. 21 (top left & right, bottom right).
From Saliga, *Fragments of Chicago's Past*: p. 21 (bottom left).
From *Chicago Yesterday*: p. 24.
From Zukowsky, *Chicago Architecture and Design, 1923-1993*: p. 28.

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